



**CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING**

<b>AGENDA SECTION</b>	WORK SESSION ITEMS
<b>MEETING DATE</b>	APRIL 6TH, 2026

<b>ITEM:</b>	<b>Social Media Policy</b>		
<i>Presenting Item: Will Rottler, Communications and Engagement Coordinator</i>			
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b> Administration		<b>BY/DATE:</b> Will Rottler / March 27, 2026	
<b>CORE CITY STRATEGIES:</b> <i>(please indicate areas that apply by adding an "X" in front of the selected text below)</i>			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community that Grows with Purpose and Equity		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Engaged, Effective and Forward-Thinking	
<input type="checkbox"/> High Quality Public Spaces		<input type="checkbox"/> Resilient and Prosperous Economy	
<input type="checkbox"/> Safe, Accessible and Built for Everyone		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Inclusive and Connected Community	

**BACKGROUND**

The City has a social media policy that was developed in 2012, prior to the addition of Communications staff and more recent case law related to free speech in government social media forums. The policy is outdated and has not been actively followed for many years, as its guidance would raise First Amendment concerns. Communications staff have been operating in accordance with current best practices and standards, but there is no formal policy that reflects this approach.

If a situation were to occur with its social media platforms, the City contracts with the vendor ArchiveSocial for social media archiving purposes. Through this vendor, the City can review social media posts for certain words or phrases and can show the edit history of the comments even if the comment was deleted or removed.

**SUMMARY OF CURRENT STATUS**

Recently, staff have noticed an uptick in negative comments on the City’s social media platforms. Government entities and officials are limited in what they can remove from these platforms and cannot selectively delete comments. Even when comments appear off-topic, rude, or even hateful, they are still protected under the First Amendment. Staff actively monitor social media comments, but rarely encounter content that meets the criteria for removal.

Currently, comments are allowed on the City’s social media platforms as a two-way avenue to engage community members. Though rare, there are local government entities in the metro area and beyond that have comments turned off on all social media posts.

According to the ACLU Pennsylvania, “An official government social media channel can turn off all commenting on a post without encroaching on First Amendment violations. However, if a government’s social media channel selectively deletes or limits an individual’s ability to leave a comment but allows others to continue commenting, that would be a violation of the First Amendment. An exception to this is if a comment itself is a violation of the First Amendment (e.g. advocating violence).”

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommend following the League of Minnesota Cities' Social Media Policy guidance and adopting a social media policy approved by the City Attorney. Adopting a current policy will formalize current staff practices, and making the policy public on the City's intranet and website will address transparency and help explain the City's approach.

Staff also recommend leaving comments enabled on social media platforms to allow for interaction with community members. Staff are often able to answer community questions on social media, and it can be a community-building tool. Though some comments might not align with the City's or City Council's priorities or projects, there is a fair amount of positive discourse on social media.

With future projects such as the parks master plan and day-to-day news items, staff strongly believe that continuing to allow comments provides positive engagement opportunities that outweigh the negative.

**Requested Council Action/ Discussion Topics / Key Questions**

*(Briefly state the specific action staff is requesting of the City Council, if any. For example: provide direction, discuss options, or review information.)*

Following the work session discussion, staff would like direction on how to move forward with a social media policy. Staff recommend adopting a social media policy that is guided by the League of Minnesota Cities and approved by the City Attorney.

**ATTACHMENT(S)**

- League of Minnesota Cities Social Media Policy
- 2012 City of Columbia Heights Social Media Policy
- City of Edina Social Media Policy
- City of St. Louis Park Social Media Policy